

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

VOLUME XVIII. No. 13

THE BEACON PRESS, INC., BOSTON, MASS.

DECEMBER 25, 1927

IT was Jimmy Grantley's birthday, and three of his chums with their sisters were helping him to celebrate.

After playing games till they were tired, they sat down to a table that had a beautiful white cake, with fourteen lighted candles, as a centerpiece. Every one had two pieces of the delicious loaf with a generous dish of ice-cream, and then Jimmy invited his guests to go roller-skating. His rink was the cement sidewalk, and since every one had brought his skates for just this purpose there was a joyous scramble for sweaters and rollers and with a merry shout they were away.

"Clear the track for the lightning express!" sang out Jimmy.

"Hey, there, Chuck! don't be so slow," called Billy Downs.

Back and forth the boys and girls went, thoroughly enjoying the exercise in the bracing December air, when suddenly a new figure appeared on the scene, that of Mr. Brewster, Jimmy's next-door neighbor.

"Stop that, you young scalawags!" he cried, shaking his cane at them threateningly from his position on the porch. "You have no business tearing along my sidewalk like that, and I won't have it. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," answered Jimmy, as he paused for a moment in dazed surprise.

"Then mind what I say," retorted the elderly man and he stalked back into the house.

"My, but isn't he fierce?" said Billy. "I'd hate to have him for my neighbor."

"He's certainly an awful crank," agreed Jimmy, wrathfully, feeling that the occurrence was quite a damper on the success of his party.

"His walk is new and I suppose he's afraid we'll wear it out," put in Jimmy's sister Kathie.

"We couldn't hurt it anyway, just skating on it," protested Jimmy; "but

Their Christmas Surprise

By Rose E. Parmele



"Jimmy opened the front door to go out and sweep the porch; then he stepped back suddenly."

come on, folks, we'll go the other way. I'm sure no one else will object."

The popularity of roller skating had been revived in the schools of Mapleton and contributed much to the enjoyment as well as the healthful exercise of the pupils. When Jimmy asked his guests to bring their skates with them he had met with a hearty response, and Mr. Brewster's objection was the only cloud on their happiness. The cold air was exhilarating and the sunshine glorious, so the vexing interruption was soon forgotten in their sport, and when the time arrived for the visitors to depart they all declared they had had a wonderful time.

But Jimmy recalled the one blot on their happy day in relating some of the events to his mother later.

"Don't you think it was real mean of him, Mother, to be so hateful when I had company?" Jimmy remarked.

"I don't think he was very polite," chimed Kathie.

"Maybe he had what he considered a good reason for not wanting you to skate on his walk," replied Mrs. Grantley; "though he might have expressed himself more kindly. But we should not judge him too harshly. Maybe his lumbago is worse and it gets on his nerves. We might be pretty savage too, if we had a pain in our back that kept us awake at night. We really ought to feel sorry for him and not treasure up any hard feelings against him."

Jimmy went to the kitchen for water for his poinsettia.

"I wonder if my plant will really bloom for Christmas?" he ruminated.

"It has lots of time — three whole weeks," answered Kathie, with a longing sigh.

"I know what I'm going to get for Mother," exclaimed ten-year-old Donnie with shining eyes, "and I'm going to tie it to the Christmas tree. Mayn't I, Mother?"

"Children, would you be very much disappointed if we did not have a tree this year?" asked Mrs. Grantley anxiously.

"Not have a tree!" echoed Kathie in a tone which showed very plainly what she thought about the matter.

"Where will we put our presents?" Donnie wanted to know.

"I'll put mine in Mother's work basket," declared small Ruth Ellen with an emphatic nod.

Jimmy smiled knowingly at first, thinking his mother was only joking but seeing her serious face his own sobered.

"We've always had a tree," he began, "but I don't suppose we really need one," he ended bravely.

"You see, we haven't as much money as we expected to have this year, because Father was sick," Mother explained; "and we need so many things that Father can hardly spare the money for a tree,

but if you are going to miss it dreadfully —

"Course we won't," assured Jimmy manfully; "if it's going to make things hard for Father we don't want it."

"Course not," agreed Kathie quickly. "We don't want him to worry about anything at Christmas time, when everybody should be happy." She thought it would be a strange Christmas without a tree, and they had a beautiful star for it left from last year and a box full of gay ornaments, but she did not want anything that would cause anxiety to her father.

"We don't need a tree," declared Donnie sturdily, and Ruth Ellen piped up, "I love Father."

"Well, well, you are all so sweet about giving up that I'm going to think up something new for a surprise," affirmed Mother; "a new way to give our gifts."

"Hurrah for Mother!" shouted Jimmy. "We know what your surprises are, they're simply great."

"It will be something lovely, I'm sure," added Kathie. "Oh, I can hardly wait to know what it is!"

"Just be patient and you'll see," nodded Mother mysteriously. "But you know it's the Christmas spirit that counts," she added, "when we remember the Giver of all our blessings and have only love and good-will in our hearts for everybody. We can have that if there's nothing but a market basket to hold our presents."

The little group broke up, but Jimmy lingered till last.

"Mother, you're just grand," he breathed fervently. He did not find it easy to express himself, but his mother understood. She thought it one of the finest compliments she had ever received, and her shining look told him so.

Soon after this there were many conferences held behind closed doors, and mysterious packages began to be smuggled into the house with gay bursts of laughter quickly smothered at the approach of some member of the family who was supposed to be safely out of hearing. The season now approaching was always a happy one for the Grantleys, and this was no exception to the rule. Instead of mourning because they could have no beautiful tree, the love which prompted them to go without it willingly, even gladly, bound them closer together and glorified the sacrifices they made to purchase a longed-for treasure for brother or sister.

Just a week before Christmas when the Grantleys awoke in the morning they found the outer world transformed. There had been a heavy fall of snow, and trees, terraces and houses glistened radiantly in the sunshine that followed the storm.

"It makes everything look so Christ-massy," exulted Jimmy.

The Christmas Song

BY ESTHER ANN CLARK

Oh, sing the song of Christmas,
The song of joy and love,
The song the shining angels
Sang long ago, above
The sleeping town of Bethlehem
Where baby Jesus lay,
Low-cradled in a manger,
On that first Christmas day.

Yes, sing the song of glory,
Of gladness and good-will;
And let its golden music
Our hearts with sweetness fill,
Till all the world of brothers
From fear and striving cease;
And everywhere God's children
Know only love and peace.

"I love it and I hope it will last till after the holidays," returned Kathie.

Jimmy shouldered a shovel and Kathie a broom and proceeded to clear their walks. Mr. Brewster was already out and looked up with a short "good-morning" as they fell to work. The snow, which was almost feathery light, was rather deep, and Mr. Brewster stopped shovelling suddenly, put his hand to his back a moment and then went into the house. Jimmy and Kathie shovelled and swept to the end of their walk and looked down the snowy length of their neighbor's.

"If it was any one but Mr. Brewster," the thought occurred to each of them, "how glad I'd be to clean it for him. But he won't appreciate it — maybe he'll drive us away. He's not a person one likes to do anything for. He'd better clean his own walk."

"His back must be awful lame," Kathie spoke her next thought.

"Yes," admitted Jimmy; "he hurt it terribly, I guess." "What if it were Father?" his thoughts ran on. "Wouldn't we be glad if some one helped him? But then, Father is different. . . . How still and beautiful the snow is. . . . Love and good-will to everybody." He gazed across the billowy whiteness of curbs and terraces, his thoughts still racing on.

"We have so much, Kathie," he said aloud, "and he has so little. We can give him love and good-will, can't we?"

"Of course," replied Kathie. "I feel so sorry for him."

They set to work valiantly and soon their task was finished. When they told their mother what they had done she looked so proud and pleased all at once that they were aglow with happiness.

The next morning Jimmy opened the front door to go out and sweep the porch before going to school; then he stepped back suddenly.

"Oh, Mother!" he called. "You did get a tree, didn't you?"

"No, Jimmy. What are you talking about?" Mrs. Grantley replied.

"Then Father did," Jimmy insisted.

"No," protested his mother, coming to the door. "Maybe some one has made a mistake. Look at the card attached to it."

"Why-e-e," exclaimed Jimmy. "It says 'Merry Christmas to James, Katherine, Donald and Ruth Ellen.'" Turning over the card he read, "'Just a little olive branch from one who would like to be friends with his generous neighbors. David Brewster.' What do you suppose he means, Mother?"

"He must be referring to your shoveling for him," Mrs. Grantley replied.

"Oh, but this is so much and we did so little," protested Jimmy. "And I thought he wouldn't appreciate it!"

"Well, it's a great surprise," observed Kathie, almost too excited for speech.

"He must be naturally kind and sweet-natured, and is sorry and ashamed when his lumbago makes him cross," reflected Mrs. Grantley. "I think he is trying to show he has peace and good-will in his heart, anyway. He certainly has the Christmas spirit in spite of his pains."

The tree was so large they had to be careful not to break it in bringing it through the door. Donnie and Ruth Ellen hopped up and down in their excitement as Jimmy and Kathie held it erect to enjoy the full glory of it.

The day before Christmas the children had a delightful time decorating the tree with the pretty ornaments which they had, and Kathie had the satisfaction of placing the lovely star at the top herself. The gifts were to be slipped in and piled beneath it the last thing before going to bed. They all declared it was the loveliest tree they ever saw and in the evening they invited Mr. and Mrs. Brewster to come over to see it. They were glad to come and Mr. Brewster said the tree was very pretty indeed.

He joined in the Christmas carols with a deep bass voice that nearly drowned Father's sweet tenor, but nobody minded it because everybody was so happy. When at last the visitors rose to go, Mr. Brewster said,

"This has been the most delightful evening I have spent for a long time, and all because two young people were kind and forgiving to a man soured by sleepless nights and pain. But he's going to turn over a new leaf," he added with a wistful smile.

"Isn't Christmas a wonderful time? I wish it lasted the whole year," sighed Kathie, as she went upstairs later.

"It might, if we would have love and good-will in our hearts for everybody every day in the year," suggested Jimmy thoughtfully.

"I'LL have to learn to do things when you marry Lou and set up for yourself," argued Jack, "so you might as well let me take the team in to Carrick."

Kim laughed — a grim little laugh.

"If you think I'm going to marry and leave Mother and you kids to run this old farm you're mistaken," he retorted. "Lou understands. Now, *quit!* We won't risk having any broken bones around Christmas-time."

And Jack, in sheer amazement, went off. He felt he wanted to shout out that Kim was about the best brother a chap had ever had, for he knew how he and Lou had been hoping to buy snug little Reesways Farm in the Hollow; but Kim was wanted too badly in the old home nest now Dad was dead, and the little mother left to run the farm with fourteen-year-old Jack as the eldest, — since Kim was only step-son and brother after all. *Only!* But he gave up the idea of a bargain home and marriage with the girl he loved . . . for the sake of the mother and kids. Jack knew it was up to him to stand by Kim in the best way. So he went to collect wood to store before the winter snows all but sealed the farm doors.

There was a man up there among the bare-branched trees, a lean, hungry-looking man, who shouted to ask Jack a question.

"Can I get food and lodging 'way down at the homestead?" he asked. "I've no money to pay, and I'm tuckered out. But I thought maybe you folk would have a spare corner."

Jack nodded. These were lean days at the Loneways Farm — but he knew what his mother's answer would be.

"It's Christmas-time," he replied; "I guess we'll find you a corner."

And the little mother who made it her rule of life to smile when skies were gray, welcomed the stranger as kindly as though he had been a dear friend come for the Christmas season.

Not that he responded too well. He was a restless, hawk-eyed fellow, who looked as if he had wearied of a lone trail.

Kim had guessed right when he asked if he was fresh out from England.

"If you call a year of it fresh out, that's so," said Garth Geslack, "but it's more a lifetime to me." He didn't say more, but the little mother shook her head when she spoke to Kim.

"We must try and make his Christmas cheery, lad," she said, "for I reckon he carries a sore

ing just because he couldn't have his dream home.

"It's going to be a good Christmas," thought Jack, "and I'll keep the kids laughing."

But things were against Jack, it seemed, for there was no mistaking the anxiety on the little mother's face when he fetched in his firewood. Some bills had come in — unpaid — there was no money in the bank, and unless some other way were found it meant selling "Firefly" and the buggy, and just living, hand to mouth, till things took a turn.

The little mother had no heart to play merry games this Christmas Eve, but she did her best for sake of the jolly twins and Doll-Doll, and Queenie. Jack and Kim did their best too; they were glad the stranger had gone off to bed. He was some wet-blanket!

But Jack couldn't sleep well that night, and when the moonlight came shining in through the frost-starred window of his wee attic he got up and dressed. Some one besides himself was awake, for he heard movements below, and presently, peeping out, he saw the stranger creeping off over the frozen snow. The man was carrying a sack, a pick, and some cord. Cool Jack pounced on the truth at once. Garth Geslack was going on the trail of Dead Man's Secret.

If you know of any boy of fourteen, just mad crazy for a fortune to help his people, who would not have followed on that trail I don't! Jack was out . . . grinning to himself as he remembered Scout training. He hadn't been on any parades lately, but he remembered the Scout law — and the art of tracking.

He had tracked Garth Geslack that night over the frozen snow till they came to the valley where a stream flowed between high banks towards the river beyond.

It was easier to scout here where gray rocks stood towering, . . . and Jack had forgotten a first chill and lonesomeness as he stood crouched, watching the man who, having climbed up one side of that stone-strewn valley, came to a spot where a rocky wall rose in horseshoe formation around a deep pool.

Jack hesitated. The man he had followed had disappeared from sight . . . and at first he did not know what to do. For . . . he dared not join the lonely searcher; . . . and to spy was difficult. He found a way at last, — trust a Scout for that! and crawled, writhed, twisted on his way up amongst the crags.

There, he saw a strange sight. Peeping between the rocks he

The Hidden Treasure

A Christmas Tale for Boys

By May Wynne

heart. Maybe he has a wife and children at home, for whom he's looking for fortune and can't find it."

Jack was listening, but did not speak. He had had many a dream of fortune-finding himself, for there were tales told by ranchers, and prospectors too, when they happened to drift this way. Tales of a fortune hidden away in some valley not too far distant, which went by the name of "Dead Man's Secret."

Jack was chopping wood for the Christmas dinner to be cooked by next day when the stranger came and peered into the shed.

"Can you locate me a lone bit of valley hereabouts?" he asked, "with a river running through it . . . and trees growing thick up 'a gully'?"

Jack held his hatchet gripped, his eyes sparkling.

"Is it Dead Man's Secret you are after?" he cried; "if so, you might be taking me along." He was startled to see the scowl on the other's face, while the man snarled, saying he knew nothing of Dead Men's Secrets, and wanted no kid boys hanging around him.

It hurt Jack to be shouted at that way, but he didn't say anything. He meant to try and play the game at home the same as Kim, who didn't go about snarling.



"Could he endure it . . . or should he be dragged down and over, too?"

saw how Garth Geslack had fastened the rope to one of the spiral points of a crag, and now swung over the pool, pick in hand. As he swung, trying to steady himself with back against one side of the rock and feet pressed to the other, he struck at the wall above. Again . . . again . . . again, and so intent was he on his work that he never noted what Jack was seeing, namely, that the rope, fraying with the friction, was parting . . . strand by strand. A few minutes only . . . and the last strand would snap . . . and the man be precipitated into the black waters of the pool.

Jack shivered. It was a terrible sight . . . to see a man on the threshold perhaps of a great gain . . . which would be paid for by his life. Beads of perspiration gathered on the boy's brow . . . he dared not shout . . . but he was slipping down . . . down . . . towards the edge of that weird place where he could hear the splash of water as rock fell away under the blows of the pick.

"Garth Geslack!" he cried, and his voice sounded shrill. "Garth Geslack!" The man looked up. In the moonlight his face looked evil enough with passion and fear. In the moment of crisis he was ready for anything. His goal was in sight — and this boy . . . this spy . . . might in some way he did not stop to consider . . . rob him of his fortune.

From where he knelt Jack could see the cave-like opening in the rock, and guessed what it must be. The secret which had balked so many a searcher for years. *Dead Man's Secret*. What that secret was . . . this Garth Geslack would be learning. But the boy might betray . . . rob . . . destroy his hope. In a spasm of fury the man snatched at a loosened fragment of rock and hurled it upward.

It struck Jack's cheek, missing his forehead and eye by a fraction, and, as he fell back, more startled than hurt, the snapping of a last strand hurled his assailant down into the pool below.

Jack heard the cry, and it brought him to his knees peering down. It was a terrible moment . . . for the boy out here in the cold and loneliness of a winter's night . . . the blood freezing on his wounded cheek, while he shivered at the thought of tragedy and death.

But it was Geslack's face which looked up at him. The man, immersed to the shoulders in the water, clung to the ledge with which his hands had come in contact; a ledge of stone which already threatened to crumble and break away.

"Save! . . ." screamed Geslack, . . . but had little hope, . . . since who was there to save him but a lad he had just struck at . . . not caring what injury he inflicted?

But Jack did not hesitate. It was



How the Mistletoe Grows

by Evelyn Thorp

*Forth to the woods merry men did go
To gather in the Mistletoe."*

SIR WALTER SCOTT'S *Marmion*.

There is no plant, unless it be the holly, that we associate so much with the festivities of Christmas as the familiar mistletoe. We love it for its fragile beauty, and delight in its decorative holiday effects.

But did you ever see it grow?

It is a curious plant of the honeysuckle family. It is known as a parasite because it secures its nourishment from the life of another plant and contributes nothing, itself, to the common weal. Living as it does on the sap of another plant, it needs no nutriment from the earth, consequently there is no necessity for its seeds to fall to the ground.

The seeds of the mistletoe are great travelers, being carried by birds which are tempted by the waxen berries as food. The birds carry them to other trees which they frequent, the tiny discarded seed lodges in a crevice of the bark and germinates in the spring. The seeds are surrounded by a glutinous substance of a strongly adhesive nature and during the bird's meal a few are sure to be left sticking to the bark.

only . . . that this was Christmas Eve . . . or that he must obey the Scout law . . . or even be worthy of Kim's example: There was the teaching of a Greater Love than all in Jack's heart as he looked down, and then stretched for the rope. There wouldn't be enough of that rope to fasten to the crag . . . but if he twisted it about his own body, and lay against the screening rock, Geslack might climb to safety.

Yet . . . if so . . . what would the end be? . . . since Geslack had shown already . . . that he would have no partner in the night's work.

"Save me!" screamed the man, . . . "for love of Heaven. I—" He had no time to give promises, for the rope had fallen, and he had clutched it . . . scarcely realizing how safety was to be purchased.

The sweat lay in beads on Jack's brow. The pain . . . was terrible; . . . that rope cut like a knife as he lay against the rock . . . with a man's weight at the other end.

A bird of the thrush family, called missel-thrush because it particularly delights in these tempting berries, is the chief distributor. As these birds generally fly in flocks, keeping in one line of direction, it is not uncommon to see a corresponding line of mistletoe bushes ranging across the country for a long distance. Even when the line is broken by a river, it will be resumed at the nearest tree across the water.

It is most commonly found on the apple tree, due perhaps to the disposition of that tree to form knots, a disease produced from an excess of sap to which the sucking mistletoe offers relief. Next to the apple tree, it favors most the whitethorn and poplar.

As it grows it forms a green tuft whose stalks are more or less firm. Its branches are always green, always living throughout the seasons. It seems curious that though the mistletoe flowers earlier in the year than the apple tree on which it lives, it does not ripen its small white berries until December. This may be because of its inability to get sufficient nourishment from the tree until its own fruit has matured. It grows more or less freely in every country where there are trees suited to its existence.

Could he endure it . . . or should he be dragged down and over too? There was a knife in his hand . . . and the knife showed a way out. Jack's fingers curled around the handle. A stroke . . . and the torture would be ended. A stroke . . . and the fortune . . . of *Dead Man's Secret* would be his. A cry broke from his swollen lips.

"Help!"

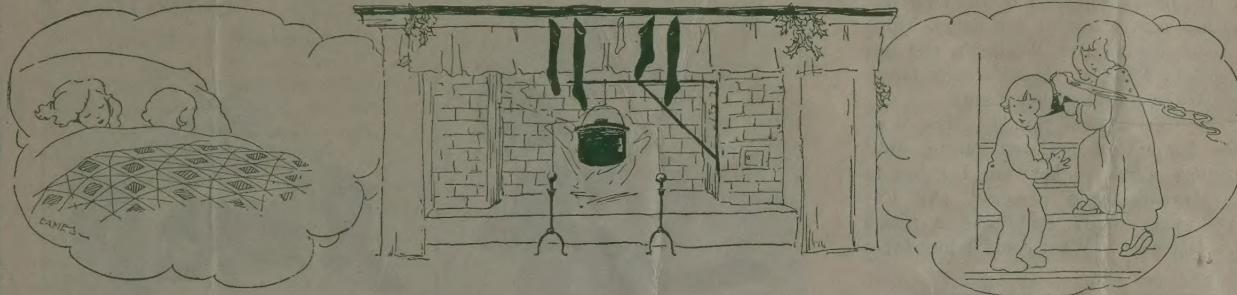
But it was not earthly help he sought.

Garth Geslack bent over the unconscious lad. Tears were running down his cheeks in the reaction from deadly fear. He had seen the broken skin and bruised flesh about Jack's body, and knew what the cost of his life had been. Jack opened his eyes.

"Help!" he whispered. Geslack dropped to his knees.

"You lie here, laddie," said he, "for five minutes, then . . . I'll carry you home. But we've something . . . to

(Continued on page 55)



Stockings, stockings,
Hanging in a row;
Santa's coming
With good things, I know.

Eris

By Ada Escousse

SLAM! BANG! went the door, and without looking up from her sewing Mrs. Wallace smiled and said: "Good evening, Eris."

"Good evening, Mrs. Wallace! How'd you know it was me?" the little girl ran across the room and hugged Mrs. Wallace ardently. "You didn't even look at me, how'd you know who it was?"

"Quite simple, dear. Who else but Eris bangs doors around here?"

Then, to Mrs. Wallace's dismay, Eris burst into tears. "Why, Eris! why, Eris!" she put her sewing aside quickly and gathered the thin little body of her neighbor's child into her arms. "I didn't mean to hurt you. We are always joking about your door-slammimg, aren't we?"

"Y-yes'm," Eris sobbed, "b-but it's quit b-being a j-joke now, Mrs. Wallace, 'cause Grandfather Granger is mad at me!"

Mrs. Wallace rocked back and forth a few minutes, the black head of the girl against her cheek, for she dearly loved her neighbor's child, the playmate of her own little Rose whom God had taken to bloom in His heavenly garden.

"Grandfather Granger angry with you, darling?" Mrs. Wallace thought of the little old man who seemed saint-like with his beaming, kindly face, the fringe of white hair surrounding the bald dome of his head "just like a halo," Eris had once said.

"Tell me all about it, Eris," she said kindly. "I can't believe your grandfather is angry with you."

"Oh, but he is! He said my name j-just suited me! That Eris was the g-goddess of d-discord, and I b-bring discord wherever I go b-because I can't remember not to slam doors. You know, Mrs. Wallace, I stop at Grandfather's every morning on my way to school, and he's had a terrible cold all week and says his head hurts dreadfully, and he's asked

Christmas Eve

BY RAELENE NEWELL WHITE

Children, children,
Scurry up the stairs,
Bedtime, bedtime,
Don't forget your prayers!

Cuddle, cuddle,
Tuck the covers round,
Snuggle, snuggle,
See you make no sound!

me and asked me not to bang his doors and every time I forgot.

"This morning when I went to see him I banged the door and he scolded me. Well, when I went on to school I found I'd forgotten my 'rithmetic and went back to Grandfather's to get it. The door was closed and I opened it and banged it behind me. Grandfather was sitting with his head resting on his arms at the library table and he jumped like everything. Then he — he glared at me and he said: 'Eris, this door-slammimg has got to stop! I almost believe you do it purposely. Now, remember, if I have to tell you another time I shall punish you severely!' and, oh, Mrs. Wallace, he looked awful mad!"

"What did you say to him, dear?"

"I — I told him that I'd try not to slam the door again, that I'd ask God to help me remember, and for him please not to be angry with me. He went over to the window and stood looking out. Then after awhile he said: 'Run along to school, Eris. When you show me you can remember, why, I'll not be angry any more.' — So, you s-see, Mrs. Wallace, he really is angry and he doesn't love me any m-more!" She was crying again.

"There, there, honey, of course Grandfather loves you. But don't you see, he'd been begging you all week not to slam doors, and when you just would, why, he thinks you don't love him."

"W-what am I g-going to do about it? To show him that I do?"

"Why, make up your mind that you are going to quit this habit. It really is a bad habit, Eris. I have heard your mother scolding you about it. You are getting to be a big girl, nearly ten,

Sleep now, sleep now,
Close your bright eyes tight,
Dear old Santa's
Coming here tonight!

aren't you? Quite time you learned to be more ladylike. Now, I have a plan. Your mother gives you twenty-five cents each week, doesn't she?"

"Yes'm."

"Well, I have a little penny-bank, and every time you slam a door you must put a penny in this bank. We'll give the money to the Community Chest afterwards."

"I'll try the plan," Eris promised dolefully, "cause I can't stand having Grandfather angry with me; but I know I'll never have any money for candy."

Eris' mother called her, and after kissing Mrs. Wallace good-bye the child went out, carefully closing the door behind her. Then she opened it a crack and called: "There! that's one penny the bank won't get, and here's another!"

A good beginning; but Eris' home was right next door, and Mrs. Wallace heard her run up the steps, across the porch, open the front door and bang it behind her!

"Poor kiddie!" Mrs. Wallace sighed. "I am afraid it will take time to break such a habit."

On Saturday all but one nickel of Eris' twenty-five cents went into the bank and she tearfully confided that Grandfather Granger was still "mad" and wouldn't talk to her at all, despite the fact that she had only slammed the door of his study once that week.

"It's nearly Christmas. I'll feel terrible if he's mad at me then, 'cause he always comes over to our house and gives out the presents on the tree. Last year he gave me a beautiful gold bracelet — I wish I could give him a present."

"If you didn't have to put all of your money in the 'door-slam' bank (for thus Eris had christened it) you could buy Grandfather a little present."

"Oh, that would be lovely!" Eris cried out eagerly. "Just you wait, old-door-slam-bank, you're not getting any of my money this week!"

At the end of the second week Eris

was the proud possessor of twenty cents. She had only slammed five doors. Three at home, one at Mrs. Wallace's, and one at school. None at Grandfather's home. Mrs. Wallace praised her highly.

"But Christmas is Sunday, Mrs. Wallace. I won't get my next quarter until Saturday night, so how am I going to buy Grandfather a present? All I've got is this twenty cents and a nickel from last week. What could I buy for a quarter?"

"A pretty card or a handkerchief."

"Grandfather couldn't use a card; a handkerchief would be best, 'cause I heard Mrs. Murphy say Grandfather's always losing his."

So Eris gave the twenty-five cents, which meant twenty-five doors that had *not* been slammed, to Mrs. Wallace, and when the latter went to town she bought a handkerchief. One that was soft, of linen, finely hemstitched, having a dainty embroidered initial in one corner.

"Oh, it's beautiful!" Eris exclaimed delightedly. "I didn't think it would be so nice, and with a 'initial in it, too. A box with tissue paper and a card!" Doubtfully, "You — you didn't pay more than twenty-five cents for it, did you Mrs. Wallace?"

Mrs. Wallace smiled reassuringly. "No, dear. It was only a quarter. The clerk said he remembered how hard it had been for him to quit slamming doors; that is why he gave me such a nice one."

Eris breathed a great sigh of relief. "I'm glad, for I wanted this to be my very own present and I was afraid you'd paid for some of it."

Christmas morning Mrs. Wallace waited eagerly for Eris' return. Would Grandfather Granger "make up" with Eris? Surely he would see that he had carried his teasing far enough, see that the little girl had almost quit slamming doors.

Later Mrs. Wallace learned from Eris and Grandfather Granger just what had happened.

Eris with the precious handkerchief in its box and tissue paper wrapping had rung the bell at her grandfather's home.

"Mr. Granger's in the study," Mrs. Murphy, the housekeeper, had told Eris, and the little girl walked softly into the room where the old man sat reading the morning paper.

Holding the package behind her she walked up to him and said timidly: "Good-morning, Grandfather."

"Oh — good morning, Eris"; but he continued reading his paper.

"Are you still mad at me, Grandfather?"

"We — ll, afraid I am."

Eris was not quite sure his voice sounded angry. She laid the package upon his knee and said in a small, choky



Christmas Day in Kitten Town

BY WILLIAM THOMPSON

You have heard of Kitten Town,
The Town of great renown,
Where baby kits of every age
Are black, and white, and brown.

And all day long and in the night,
You hear them cry and purr,
Such cunning little fuzzy things,
Just lumps of downy fur.

Of course, they have their Christmas
Day,
The same as you and me,
And everything that gives them joy
Except the Christmas tree.

And Auntie Claus, old Mrs. Kat,
Brings Noah's ark, and cotton rat,
And elephant, and kangaroo,
And lion, bear, and monkey, too.

But, sleeping soundly, Kittie Kats
Care not for toys or cotton rats.
They sleep and dream the hours away,
In Kitten Town on Christmas Day.

voice: "Well, I can't help it if you *are* mad, I've brought you a Christmas present, so there!"

Hastily she turned away and ran from the room, for the tears were pretty close. At the door she stopped, however, and threw back over her shoulder, "If you're still mad — angry, I mean — why, you don't keep your word, 'cause I've not slammed your door all this week and only once last week. And — and I've not slammed but *five* doors *anywhere* this week."

She closed the door softly, although it had been wide open when she came into the room. In the tiniest fraction of a second she opened it again and called. "Next week I'm not going to slam *any* doors." Then, "It's got a beautiful 'initial in it and I earned the money by *not* slamming doors!"

Eris left the door open this time and peeked around the casing. Grandfather Granger had laid his paper aside and, with spectacles on the end of his nose, was untying the package.

She watched him read the card, saw

him take out the beautiful handkerchief, while a tender smile swept over his face. "God bless her little heart!" he said aloud. Then, "Eris, come here!"

With winged feet she sped back to the room and flung herself into his arms.

And Eris kept her word. She never, never slammed another door, closed them so softly, so gently, that Grandfather Granger said: "We'll have to get another name for you, dear; you've quit being a goddess of discord."

Christmas

BY BEATRICE HUNT

A day when young and old rejoice with
happiness to see
The joyous smile of friends and kin
around the Christmas tree;
A day when loving aged hearts beat time
in measure gay
At thought of other times long gone the
path of yesterday.
Long may our hearts keep tryst with this,
the day of Jesus' birth,
With holy calm and quiet faith, as well
as joy and mirth.

A Christmas Legend

By Daisy Brown

Of all the Christmas legends, none is more beautiful than that of the Christ-Child and the evergreen, which is told in Germany, as the lights sparkle on the trees or the Yule-log burns brightly.* On Christmas Eve, so the story runs, a little child, carrying a branch of evergreen upon his shoulder, goes from door to door asking for a bit of bread or a sip of water. Wherever he is welcome, he leaves a sprig of evergreen. Those who receive it lovingly are happy and blessed throughout the year, for the little traveler is none other than the Christ-Child Himself, and, of course, where He is, there must be peace and happiness.

In order that the little Christ-Child may not lose His way as He wanders about with His bough of evergreen, the good folk in the village place a lighted candle in their windows, and if, by chance, a poor person comes to their doors on Christmas Eve, they take him in, too, for they say, "Maybe, this is the Christ-Child in disguise." So, the best happiness of all comes to them as they watch for the little Christ-Child and His evergreen bough on Christmas Eve, and this happiness lasts throughout the year.

The Hidden Treasure

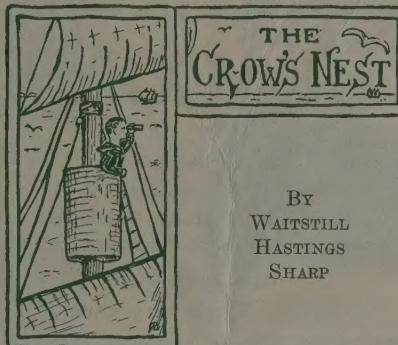
(Continued from page 52)

take with us. Something belonging to you and me. It's a Dead Man's Secret."

Jack raised himself. He couldn't speak just now, the excitement was too tense, but he watched Garth Geslack climb down to an opening in the rock . . . and bring back a packet . . . wrapped in leather and fastened by twisted wire. And Jack's moan was one of disappointment. He had dreamed of nuggets . . . of golden fortune . . . of Kim being master of Reesways Farm, . . . of good days without the millstone of debt and poverty. Instead, he sat there, cold and suffering, whilst Garth Geslack knelt beside him untwisting that rusty wire.

"It was Rodney Reenes on his deathbed told me the secret," said he. "It belonged to his brother who placed this packet down there, and then on his way back was shot by the rustlers, who had wind of his find and meant to rob him. Conway Reenes had written to Rodney, but the latter—a cripple,—and a crank — never followed the clue. He hardly believed in what he told me; but I was a desperate man, with those I love all but starving in England, a cripple girl to whom money means health. And now . . ."

The leather wrappings fell aside. Jack gave a cry of amazement. Emeralds . . .



BY
WAITSTILL
HASTINGS
SHARP

Probably every boy or girl whose eyes will travel down the words of this column is a boy or girl whose home is warm and full of welcome; whose food is good and nourishing; whose-bed is clean and restful; whose school is so full of interesting things to learn and discover that the day isn't long enough to learn and discover them all. I am rather sorry to admit that those are the only boys and girls whom I can think of as being my readers. I feel almost as if I had lanterns to give away on Christmas Eve — and all the folks I met were carrying lanterns!

But there are folks — and millions of them — who are not carrying lanterns. They have none. We are likely (I almost wrote "liable") to think that the great Wilberforce in England and our great Lincoln in America ended slavery. But they did not. "Human slavery today!" I hear you exclaim. "People working like beasts for other people?"

Yes — uncounted thousands of slaves in parts of Asia and Africa. In Tanganyika down in Eastern Africa 165,000 slaves have just been set free. "Just been" is small credit to the human race. In

emeralds . . . glittering . . . wonderful stones . . . with the green fire shining through all the dirt and grim.

"Dead Man's Fortune, for you and me, lad," said Garth Geslack. "And it was you who earned your share in the best way."

Stooping, he lifted the lad in his arms. Dawn was breaking — Christmas morning . . . when the homestead came in sight.

"Will you let me tell them — the story?" asked Jack, — and his big partner laughed at the boy's eagerness.

It was a strange little group gathered in the lone farm parlor an hour later.

Kim was near the doorway . . . smiling, but little guessing, while the youngsters crowded to know whether it were Garth Geslack or just brother Jack who was bringing Father Christmas to the home.

And Jack told the story breathlessly.

Burma an English officer has just given his life leading an expedition which released 4,000 slaves. At Kalat, in Baluchistan, a law has just been passed abolishing domestic slavery, and men-servants and maid-servants can no longer be sold like pigs and horses.

1. How were these people saved from further slavery and their children saved from it forever? Because the League of Nations exists to discover terrible things like these and stop them. In September, 1926, the men who met at Geneva to represent the world-thoughts of fifty nations found out that countless thousands of people were still in slavery, being bought and sold and working all their lives like animals. So these men signed an agreement — called "The Slavery Convention" — that they would study slavery and stop it. And since then armies of emancipation have been carrying the light of freedom into darkest Africa and darkest Asia.

But still there are thousands of people in slavery, and the late work is only just begun.

2. WHY is this upon the conscience of the world? Because religion has gone forward with the tide of years, and we know that men and women and little children have a right to their own souls. The Religion of 1927 includes the idea that the hands and head and heart of a human being are his own — to raise his home, to make his way in the world, to bring up his little ones.

What be the signs of these times? When the races and nations and creeds of men can unite to stay the goad and strike off the chains of slavery, I say:

Religion goes forward!

Strength to the League of Nations that prepares the way of the Lord!

The story of Dead Man's Secret, and how the sequel meant Kim's purchase of Reesways Farm, . . . and the paying of debts; of a new horse and buggy . . . and a piano for sister Queenie. It meant great things for the stranger, too . . . he told of that as well, but what he did not tell to those joyous, happy listeners was the tale Garth added presently.

"We've found fortune, friends," said he. "And, as Jack says, it's likely to be the grandest Christmas day ever to dawn for us, but we'll tell you what we owe it to . . . and that's the Christmas spirit of love and fellowship. We wouldn't have learned Dead Man's Secret without those two, — and so I say, God bless Christmas . . . and the boy who spelt it right."

It was a big moment for Jack as he looked from the little mother to his hero, Kim, and thought of what he should now be able to do for them.

THE BEACON CLUB

The Editor's Post Box

Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

A very Merry Christmas to you all!
THE EDITOR.

33 COMMONWEALTH AVE.,
BOSTON, MASS.

Dear Editor: I belong to the Beacon Club already and I enjoy it very much. Best of all I like the Puzzlers. They are interesting and I find that they sharpen people's minds. I enjoy them so much that I am sending in a few.

Our minister is Rev. Robert L. Jones, and we have many interesting talks. I also belong to a club called "The Christopher R. Eliot Club, Jr." for our last minister. The last time we met we went to a very interesting place, the Perkins Institute for the Blind. Many things were seen here.

I go to the Prince School and am in the seventh grade. One subject which I like very much is English, and another is Art. Music and Mathematics I call "the Horrid M's."

With kind regards,
MARJORIE ELLICOTT.

1234 EAST 13TH ST.,
DES MOINES, IOWA.

Dear Editor: I am already a member of the Beacon Club but I thought that I would write. I should like to have a correspondent from England. We are studying about the British Isles; our geography teacher thinks the letters will be very interesting. I wrote to *The Beacon* before and got three or four correspondents. Two of them are Calista White and Mary Smart. My Sunday-school teacher's name is Miss Van Vaator. We have a very interesting study in Sunday school this year; it is about God's Wonder World. Our minister is Mr. Adlard. He gives talks on one book of the Bible in Sunday school every other Sunday.

I am ten years old and in 5a at school. I wish some one my age would write to me.

A Beacon Club member,
EVELYN ANDERSON.

Greetings

BY ELEANOR WORCESTER

On this happy Christmas day,
When all have presents to give away,
Give thanks and cheer for all the year,
A happy Christmas and New Year.

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.
OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.
OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.

Christmas-Tide

BY ESTHER HUTCHINSON (AGE 13)

Gather, little children, 'round the wide fireside,
And hear the tales of Santa and his merry annual ride.
I'm really very sure that Santa will call here,
E'en now, when climbing our attic stairs,
I feel him very near.

Woo-oo-oo! Hear the wind outside!
Can Santa have started on his yearly ride?
If so, that dear saint is worthy of thanks,
Although we do have to forgive his queer pranks.

But come, dear children, while the family is talking,
Let's get together and hang up our stocking,
For if we delay, when Santa comes here,
Our house in the morning will lack Christmas cheer.

TAUNTON, MASS.

Answers to Puzzles in No. 11

Beheaded Words. — 1. S-hoe. 2. T-ale.
3. R-ice. 4. B-ark. 5. F-lake. 6. S-tone.

Twisted Names of Cities. — 1. Chicago. 2. Springfield. 3. New Haven. 4. Seattle. 5. Los Angeles. 6. Milwaukee. 7. Denver. 8. Wilmington. 9. Lexington. 10. Haverhill.

Double Acrostic.

M alle T
A lbin O
R adiu M
K ansa S
T acom A
W arsa W
A lban Y
I ciel E
N ecta R

THE BEACON is published weekly from the first Sunday of October to the first Sunday of June, by THE BEACON PRESS, INC., 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. Distributed also at 235 Madison Ave., New York City; 105 S. Dearborn St., Chicago; 612 Phelan Bldg., San Francisco.

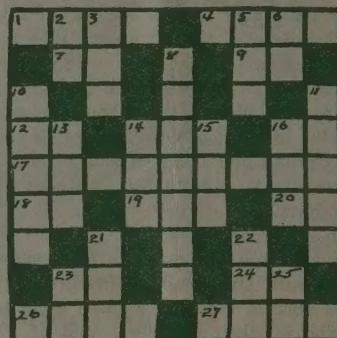
Single subscription, 60 cents.

School subscription, 50 cents.

Puzzlers

Christmas

BY M. L. C. HASTINGS



Across:

1. Christmas.
4. What children like to trim.
7. Abbreviation for South America.
9. Name of a boy.
12. Adverb meaning "like."
14. Name of a boy.
16. Fourth note in musical scale.
17. A birthday.
18. Abbreviation for Early English.
19. Girl's name.
20. A preposition.
23. Nickname for "father."
24. Part of verb "to be."
26. What children expect one day each year.
27. To decorate.

Down:

2. A pronoun.
3. A boy.
5. Color of holly berries.
6. Abbreviation of "editor."
8. What the "heavenly host" gave to the world.
10. Clock dials.
11. A builder in stone.
13. A pronoun.
14. A purpose.
15. Part of the verb "to eat."
16. How Santa Claus makes the children's stockings look.
21. The prolonged bark of a dog.
22. A kind of tree.
23. A river in Italy.
25. Seventh note of musical scale.

Entered at the Boston Post-Office as second-class matter. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on September 13, 1917.
Printed in U. S. A.